



United States Department of Agriculture



September 2013

Volume 2, Issue 2

# Landscape Scale Conservation News

## Model Landscape Scale Project—North Shore Forest Collaborative (Superior)

On a winding drive up the coast of Lake Superior's North Shore in Minnesota, one takes in the wonder of the largest Great Lake, along with picturesque lighthouses and a bevy of trees dotting the horizon.

The North Shore's coastal forest is a landscape of outstanding scenic qualities, high value natural resources, and recreation opportunities; therefore, it is the essence of the North Shore economy and lifestyle. From long-standing residents to millions of visitors – people have a vested interest in the health and well-being of this area. The Superior National Forest is a primary part of the landscape.

Current factors affecting the health of this ecosystem include dying birch, lingering effects of blow-down, invasive species, deer browse, and ice storm damage. To address these current and emerging issues, a group of local, state, and federal land management agencies, along with public & private organizations, and individuals have come together to form the **North Shore Forest Collaborative**. Their mission is to promote a healthy forest ecosystem on the North Shore for today and generations to come.

The Collaborative coordinates to share knowledge and resources in order to accomplish on-the-ground projects that address current threats and benefit the ecosystem at large. The Collaborative plans to accomplish its goals through:

- Removing invasive species in riparian areas
- Planting native species, including yellow birch

In support of the Collaborative's goals, the Superior National Forest initiated scoping (December 2012) for the North Shore Restoration Project on national forest system lands located along Highway 61. This climate change adaptation demonstration project incorporates the latest climate change research.

In addition, the Collaborative has several projects planned for the future; including:

**East End Project:** Overlaps the North Shore Restoration Project area and provides coordination between various landowners. A working group is defining desired future conditions for the area taking into consideration climate change trends, as well as native plant communities, vegetation, hydrology, landforms, soils and natural disturbance regimes.

**Caribou Project:** A group of state and county personnel, as well as non-profit organizations are working across multiple ownerships to restore lost components of the ecosystem. Additionally, this project area has been identified as a target for non-native invasive species control efforts funded through a separate grant.

These projects will have multiple benefits including: reducing the risk of wildfire, improving recreational opportunities, and maintaining and protecting water quality and quantity.

Thanks to the bright idea of Superior National Forest Wildlife Biologist Wayne Russ who jump started this effort (since retired), membership in the Collaborative now exceeds 30 entities; including:

Cook County	Lake County	MN Land Trust
MN Forest Resource Council	MN Department of Transportation	MN Department of Natural Resources
Natural Resources Conservation Service	The Nature Conservancy	Sugarloaf :The North Shore Stewardship Association
USDA Forest Service—Superior NF	Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center	Grand Portage
Cook County Invasive Team	Cook Co. Soil & Water Conservation Corps	Encampment Forest
Northern Bedrock Conservation Corps	MN Environmental Partnership	Flute Reed Watershed
Private Landowners		

## Landscape Scale Conservation News

- In April, Maryland’s General Assembly passed the Forest Preservation Act of 2013. This exciting new legislation establishes new and expands existing incentives and reforestation tools to help support community sustainability through forests and trees – implementing a “no net forest loss.” [{Link}](#)
- The comment period for input on the draft “Adaptive Science-Based Framework for the Great Lakes Restoration closed on July 12. The framework is intended to guide cost-effective and strategically appropriate restoration actions under the GLRI by using the best available science and applying lessons learned from past and on-going restoration projects and programs [{Link}](#)
- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently announced membership of the first advisory board to support implementation of GLRI. The Board provides advice and recommendations to the EPA Administrator, who serves as chair of the federal interagency Task Force. The federal agencies considered candidates from a broad range of interests. A public meeting of the Board was held July 23. [{Link}](#) for notes & takeaways from the meeting
- A report was recently prepared for the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation on direct economic impact of conservation; [{Link}](#)
- The Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry recently announced that the NA S&PF Strategic Plan is now available [{Link}](#) This plan identifies the most important forest-related challenges and opportunities we all face and sets priorities to guide work State and Private Forestry conducts with others toward our vision for forests in the 21st century.
- Recently, the Eastern Region formalized a partnership with Pollinator Partnership (P2); to develop two pilot pollinator workshops in Spring/Summer 2014 [{Link}](#)

## Landscape Scale Conservation Projects — Honorable Mentions



*Black River Harbor on the Ottawa National Forest*

### Ottawa’s South Central Lake Superior Partnership

The Ottawa National Forest is engaging partners, organizations, and community members in sustaining the health and viability of the South-Central Lake Superior watershed. As the major land manager in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula communities, the Ottawa has an opportunity to be a leader in implementation of the Lake Superior Bi-National Program’s Management Plan. One of the Bi-National Program’s goals is to restore and protect water quality of Lake Superior tributaries; so to facilitate that goal, the South Central Lake Superior Partnership was started. The Forest hosted a very successful workshop in July to foster watershed restoration.

Over 40 people representing 20 different organizations attended. Participants shared activities they do in south central watersheds and sought ways to better work together. The success of the workshop is reflected in the attendee’s desire to reconvene to potentially form a watershed coalition. This initiative is a good model, as there are a number of areas around Lake Superior that could benefit from having more targeted coalitions helping to achieve local objectives and contribute to lake-wide goals.

## Landscape Scale Conservation Projects — Honorable Mentions



*Site of restored savanna on the Huron-Manistee NFs*

### **Landscape Scale Restoration of Savannah on Huron-Manistee**

The Huron-Manistee National Forests has dramatically increased savanna restoration efforts in the last six years by working with partners and volunteers, as well as leveraging agency resources. The overall goal of this effort is to reverse the decline of the endangered Karner Blue Butterfly (KBB) and other rare open land species. The Forest plans to restore and maintain 20,300 acres of savanna over the next 50 years – and is on to a great start! From **50** acres per year between 1992-2005 to **400** acres between 2006-2011; and in 2012, the Forests treated **712** acres!

The National Wild Turkey Federation is a critical partner in this effort; who is also working with private landowners to do the same thing. And, volunteers have been key – between 2007 and 2012 individuals from 34 partner organizations contributed **1,445** volunteer days valued at **\$183,800**.

**Landscape Scale Conservation** - is a framework to conceive, plan, finance, and manage projects with significant conservation value—ecological, economical, and social. The broad concept of Landscape Scale Conservation includes three main components: Contributes to landscape scale goals or outcomes; connects separate but related actions and integrates internal program; and involves strong partnerships, a shared vision, and cross-boundary engagement with local communities and other landowners.

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